

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 40

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 88

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 40—Relative to hepatitis A prevention.

[Filed with Secretary of State August 14, 1997.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 40, Watson. Hepatitis A prevention.

This measure would request the State Department of Health Services to develop a plan to vaccinate food handlers in high-risk areas against hepatitis A virus infection, to encourage all food handlers in California to be vaccinated against hepatitis A, and to immediately begin a hepatitis A vaccination program in all Los Angeles schools.

WHEREAS, Approximately 9,000 students in the Los Angeles School District may have been exposed to hepatitis A by eating contaminated strawberries; and

WHEREAS, This exposure to the disease places at risk not only the students, but all persons who come in contact with the students, including the students' family members, teachers, friends, and persons who work in the school cafeteria where the strawberries were served; and

WHEREAS, Had the students and cafeteria staff been vaccinated against hepatitis A there would have been no risk of possible illness; and

WHEREAS, Hepatitis A is a disease that is already prevalent in the Latino communities, historically infecting members of these communities at rates only slightly below the rate of infection, 50 per 100,000 persons, determined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to be an epidemic; and

WHEREAS, Hepatitis A is approaching the epidemic stage, as defined by the CDC, within the entire County of Los Angeles; and

WHEREAS, Hepatitis A is spread by an infected person prior to the onset of recognizable symptoms, infects the liver, may be life-threatening, and is not treatable; and

WHEREAS, Hepatitis A is easily spread from person to person or via contaminated food; and

WHEREAS, Direct and indirect costs due to this disease total approximately \$200 million annually in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The disease can be prevented by vaccination; and

WHEREAS, The State Department of Health Services and the Los Angeles Office of Public Health have no plans in place to vaccinate

teachers, students, food handlers, or others who may be at risk of contracting hepatitis A; and

WHEREAS, The CDC has recommended that “widespread vaccination of appropriate susceptible populations can substantially lower disease incidence, eliminate transmission, and ultimately, eradicate hepatitis A virus infection”; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the State Department of Health Services is requested to develop a plan to vaccinate all food handlers within hepatitis A epidemic areas and report to the Legislature by January 1, 1998, concerning the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of implementing the plan; and be it further

Resolved, That the State Department of Health Services is requested to immediately encourage all food handlers in the state to be vaccinated against the hepatitis A; and be it further

Resolved, That the State Department of Health Services is requested to immediately begin a vaccination program in all Los Angeles schools to ensure that further exposure to contaminated food does not place children at risk of contracting hepatitis A.

